

VILLAGE OF BERRIEN SPRINGS COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Minutes of the Village of Berrien Springs Council Workshop held on Monday, April 03, 2023. President Barry Gravitt called the council workshop to order at 5:04 p.m.

Present: President Barry Gravitt, President Pro-Tem Jack Davis; Trustees: Zach Fedoruk, Lonna Johnson, Sheila Snyder, Kristin von Maur, Mark Vandevere, and Village Clerk Rachael Kuzda. Absent: None.

Also Present: *The Journal Era*, Code Enforcement Officer Shane Daniel (arrived at 5:09 p.m.), Community Coordinator Kelly Ewalt, and several audience members.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

This Council Workshop was held to discuss feral and stray cats in the Village.

President Barry Gravitt addressed that he asked Code Enforcement Officer Shane Daniel to spear head this issue and Shane Daniels put together the “Meow Patrol” report for the council.

Sheila Snyder: Agrees with the report and has done a lot of her own research. The issue will never completely go away, the Village needs to mitigate it. In agreement with the trap, neuter and return option, knowing that some cats that are sick will have to be euthanized.

Dr. Holly Shaffer of Two-by-Two Animal Hospital has offered to give the Village a 25% discount on spaying or neutering. Neutering would be \$150.00, and spaying would be \$217.50.

Kristin von Maur: Agrees with the trap, neuter, and release option to curb the issue. There would not be general agreement with euthanizing healthy cats in the Village, this is the middle ground option.

Jack Davis: The Village will never get rid of the issue completely; will we be paying for the program? Yes, the Village will be paying per President Barry Gravitt and Kristin von Maur pointed out the vets clip the ear to indicate they have already been neutered or spayed.

Shane arrived at the meeting at this time.

Mark Vandevere: The council acknowledges that there is a problem, and there will always be cats in town. Trap, neuter, and release is the most desirable option, and the unhealthy cats will be euthanized.

The SNAP program was discussed. This is an option available for qualifying families, we as a municipality do not qualify. Cats are spayed and neutered for a \$25.00 cost to the individual/family and the rest is paid by the SNAP program.

Lonna Johnson: Agrees with the trap, neuter, and release option. She would like the Village to investigate grant money options to help with the costs. We need to do something about the abandoned buildings that are housing cats.

Shane Daniel pointed out to the council that this will take time and it could be a few years before seeing results. Village residents registering cats was briefly discussed.

Zach Fedoruk: Cats are a very invasive species and there are so many facets to the issue, the council must do something about it. An active budget line item each year is needed.

President Barry Gravitt: Suggests an ad hoc committee to oversee the cat issue.

Shane Daniel addressed the council that the trap, neuter, and release program seems to be the best option by consensus of the council and urged quick action on getting the program started.

Audience Comments:

Sandy Swartz addressed the council asking about when the Council Workshop was posted and why the Village is trapping these cats. President Barry Gravitt stated the council is trying to solve a problem within the Village and that the meeting was correctly posted, early last week per Clerk Rachael Kuzda.

ADJOURNMENT

*Moved by Sheila Snyder seconded by Mark Vandevere to adjourn at 6:01 p.m. Ayes, 7, Nays, 0. Motion carried.

Rachael Kuzda, MiPMC
Village Clerk

Barry Gravitt
Village President